

REMARKS

I. Status of Claims

Claims 2-5, 7-10, 12-13, 17-20, and 22-23 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 6, 11, 14-16, and 21 are canceled without prejudice to and/or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. By this response, claims 2, 7, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20, 22, and 23 are amended. Following the above-identified amendments, claims 2, 7, 17, 22, and 23 are independent.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 6, 11, 12, 14, 16, 19, and 21 under 35 USC 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Minamiura et al. (US 6,812,670 B2).

The Office Action rejects claims 13 and 20 under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Minamiura.

The Office Action objects to claims 2-5, 7-10, 17-18, and 22-23 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of these rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

II. Allowable Subject Matter and Pending Claims

The Office Action objects to claims 2-5, 7-10, 17-18, and 22-23 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Following the above-identified amendments, objected to claims 2, 7, 17, 22, and 23 are rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. The remaining pending claims depend directly/indirectly from independent claims 2, 7, 17, 22, and 23.

Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully submitted.

III. Conclusion

The Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4420 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: May 2, 2008

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